

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 2002-427
INCIDENT NO. 02-154-e

SEPTEMBER 23, 2002

MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Investigation of Damage to Underground Facilities for 2001
(Richard P. Waltz Plumbing & Heating Co., INC.)

ORDER APPROVING
CONSENT AGREEMENT

Welch, Chairman; Nugent and Diamond, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

We approve the proposed Consent Agreement executed by Richard P. Waltz Plumbing & Heating Co., Inc. and the Commission's Damage Prevention Investigator for resolution of this matter.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On August 20, 2002, the Damage Prevention Investigator assigned to this matter issued a Notice of Probable Violation (NOPV) to Richard P. Waltz Plumbing & Heating Co., Inc. (Respondent) for an incident that occurred on June 6, 2002, at 1500 Forest Avenue, Portland. The NOPV indicated that, based on information submitted to the Commission, it appeared that the Respondent committed a probable violation(s) of Maine's Dig Safe law (Title 23 M.R.S.A. § 3360-A, relating to the protection of underground facilities) and the Commission's related rule, Chapter 895, entitled "Underground Facility Damage Prevention Requirements."

The NOPV indicated the incident location, the source of the report received by the Investigator, and the nature of the violation or violations charged. In addition, the NOPV indicated the range of potential penalties to which the Respondent could be subject and the Investigator's recommended penalty of a \$500 fine plus mandatory Damage Prevention Training for this incident. The NOPV described the process for the Respondent to acknowledge the violation(s) and to agree to the penalty under the Consent Agreement as well as the procedural options available to the Respondent to contest this charge.

The Respondent opted to enter into a Consent Agreement with the Investigator, thereby accepting the Investigator's findings and recommended penalty. The Respondent filed the signed Consent Agreement with the Commission on August 8, 2002.

III. LEGAL AUTHORITY

Under 23 M.R.S.A. §3360-A (commonly known as the Dig Safe Law), the Maine Public Utilities Commission is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the law. The statute also directs the Commission to adopt procedures to gather information to hear and resolve complaints of failure to comply with the law. These procedures are contained in Chapter 895 of the Commission's Rules, entitled "Underground Facility Damage Prevention Requirements," which became effective November 12, 2000.

IV. DECISION

After review of the evidence submitted in this case, we find the proposed Consent Agreement presents a reasonable resolution of this matter and approve it. The Respondent is hereby required to comply with the terms of the Consent Agreement or be subject to full penalty of law. As described in the Consent Agreement, the fine portion of this penalty will be waived if the required Damage Prevention Training is completed by December 2, 2002.

Accordingly, we

O R D E R

1. That the Consent Agreement is approved for full effect as of the date of this Order; and
2. That a copy of this Order and signed Consent Agreement be sent to:

Richard P. Waltz, Jr.
Plumbing & Heating Co., Inc.
536 Washington Avenue
Portland, ME 04103

Dated at Augusta, Maine this 23rd day of September 2002.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
Nugent
Diamond

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within **21 days** of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Appellate Procedure.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.